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ABSTRACT

In January 1982, the West Virginia Board of Regents, the governing board for the 16 public colleges and universities in the state, established a state-level advisory committee for teacher education. This Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) consisted of a representative from each of the public and private senior institutions having one or more teacher education programs. The Committee was charged with considering any and all matters related to teacher education and offering recommendations and proposals to the Board. The Committee was also requested to consider and react to items that may be presented from the Board. The Committee functions as the primary advisory group for teacher education as a new master plan for higher education through 1990 is being developed by the Board of Regents. This paper reviews the development of the TEAC, describes its activities and functions, and outlines the future teacher education concerns and issues in West Virginia. Applicability of this model to other states is considered. (JD)

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ABSTRACT

A STATE-LEVEL MODEL FOR COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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In January 1982, the West Virginia Board of Regents, the governing board for the 16 public colleges and universities in West Virginia, established a state-wide advisory committee for teacher education. This committee, named the Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC), was comprised of a representative appointed by the president of each public and private senior institution of higher education that had one or more programs which prepare educational personnel. There is a total of 17 such institutions in West Virginia, 11 public and 6 private.

The appointment of this advisory group was stimulated by a proposal from the West Virginia Board of Education to change the existing teacher education program approval model from one with a process-assessment orientation to one with a focus on product-assessment. This proposed change, however, was only symptomatic of a much larger issue - higher education's role in state-level policy development for teacher education had historically been a reactive role of individual or institutional response. As a result, higher education's input had been fragmented, lacking coherence and articulation. Aware of the need for a more cohesive approach to teacher education policy development and recognizing the continuing critical importance of teacher education to the State, the Board of Regents established the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

The Teacher Education Advisory Committee was charged with considering any and all matters related to teacher education and to offer recommendations and proposals to the Board. The Committee was also requested to consider and react to items that may be presented from the Board. The Committee also functions as the primary advisory group for teacher education as a new master plan for higher education through 1990 is being developed by the Board of Regents.

During the first two years of operation, a staff member of the Board of Regents was assigned as a "Liaison Coordinator" for the Committee. This individual chaired meetings, transmitted Board requests to the Committee and Committee proposals to the Board, and provided administrative and professional services to the Committee. In 1983-84, the group elected a chair from within the Committee membership and has functioned accordingly since that time.

Committee membership consists of the chief teacher education officer from each of the 17 public and private senior institutions which offer teacher education programs. Institutionally, the composition of the Committee varies from small private liberal arts colleges with only a minor emphasis on teacher education to the State university which offers a full range of education programs through the doctorate. The chief teacher certification officer, as well as other staff members, from the State Department of Education meets regularly with the Committee. Issues considered by the Committee have spanned the spectrum of issues in teacher education. Clearly, however, a primary issue has been the response and impact of proposed changes in teacher education program approval standards and certification patterns as proposed by the West Virginia Department of Education.

The Committee has been in operation for approximately 30 months. Although progress has been slow on occasion, several positive outcomes have been achieved:

1. There has been a significant increase in cooperation and information sharing among the institutions;
2. The Committee has provided a mechanism for the development of issue specific coherent positions by teacher education institutions;
3. Communication with the West Virginia Department of Education has become much more coordinated and less fragmented;
4. The development and operation of the Committee has increased the visibility of teacher education within the higher education structure;
5. The respective roles of IHEs, LEAs, and the SEAs are being clarified;
6. Teacher education personnel have become better educated about the legislative process and more involved politically in relation to teacher education issues; and
7. A better understanding of the varying roles and functions of diverse teacher education institutions has developed.

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Introduction

In January 1982, the West Virginia Board of Regents, the governing board for the 16 public colleges and universities in West Virginia, established a state-level advisory committee for teacher education.² This committee, named the Teacher Education Advisory Committee (TEAC), consisted of a representative appointed by the president of each public and private senior institution of higher education that had personnel preparation programs.

The appointment of this advisory group was stimulated by a proposal from the West Virginia Department of Education to change the existing teacher education program approval model from one with a process-assessment orientation to one with a focus on product-assessment. This proposed change, however, was only symptomatic of a much larger problem - the role of higher education in state-level teacher education policy development had historically been a reactive rather than proactive role. As a result, there had been no comprehensive and coordinated response from higher education. Aware of the need for a more cohesive approach to teacher

¹ Dr. Childress served as the initial "Liaison Coordinator" for the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

² The training and education of teachers in West Virginia "...shall be under the general direction and control of the State Board of Education, which shall, through the State Superintendent of Schools, exercise supervisory control over teacher preparation programs in public schools, in accordance with standards for program approval stated in writing by the board." (West Virginia Code, 18-2-6). Concurrently, public institutions are subject to the policies and guidelines of the Board of Regents, while those in the private sector are similarly subject to the policies and guidelines of their respective governing boards.

education policy development and recognizing the continuing critical importance of teacher education to the State, the Board of Regents established the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

This paper describes the context within which this Committee was developed. The rationale, composition and operation of the group will also be discussed. Problems encountered and outcomes achieved will be presented. Finally, the applicability of such a model to other states will be considered.

Developing a State-Level Teacher Education Advisory Committee - The Setting

Prior to discussing specific aspects of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee, the setting and antecedents which contributed to the development of the Committee are reviewed.

Teacher Education in West Virginia: 1975-1980. Between 1975-1980, all teacher education institutions and programs in West Virginia were evaluated and "approved" against a set of state-level standards that were "input" and process oriented. This evaluation and approval process included both programmatic and institutional standards and assessments.

The basic evaluation model used to implement these standards was a "peer review" approach where each institution was visited and evaluated relative to both institutional and program-specific standards. Between 1975-1980, all institutions and programs were reviewed through a series of "regular" on-site visits. A number of "continuing assessment" visits designed to assess progress made toward eliminating discrepancies identified in the "regular" visit were also conducted.

Rethinking Teacher Education in West Virginia: 1980-1982. Near the end of this five year review cycle, the West Virginia Department of Education initiated a major review of the existing program approval process and standards. The result

of this review was a proposal to reshape teacher education through an approach which became known as the "developmental model".

In concept, this model was designed to be product-focused rather than process-focused. Responsibility for many of the input and process aspects of program approval was to be retained by the institutions. Consistent with this increased focus on outcomes, testing of prospective teachers was a major component of the "developmental" approach. The model was "developmental" in that its total development was not completed prior to implementation. Rather, broad policy parameters were developed and adopted while implementation regulations and guidelines were to be cooperatively developed as the model was defined and implemented.

The major focus of teacher education activity in West Virginia between 1980-1982 was the continued development and refinement of the "developmental model" concept. In April 1982, the West Virginia Board of Education formally adopted the "developmental model" concept. Known as "Policy 5100: Assuring the Quality of Learning in West Virginia Schools: Plan for Professional Development of Educational Personnel", this policy was designed to become effective in 1985.

Response From Higher Education

In general, higher education personnel endorsed the concept of a "developmental" approach to the preparation of educational personnel in West Virginia. There were, however, a significant number of concerns and implications, both about the concept and its implementation, for institutions offering programs which prepared educational personnel:

1. A major reorientation of program development efforts from a focus on institutional and program process standards to a focus on formative and summative assessment of performance and outcomes would require additional resources and personnel;

2. The revision of programs to incorporate the essential competencies and learning outcomes adopted for the elementary and secondary schools would result in higher education relinquishing even more control of program and curricular content;
3. The increased emphasis on assessment and quantification of outcomes and the subsequent development of statewide minimum-level standards (cut-off scores) for at least one element (content specialization) of educational personnel preparation programs was not perceived to be critical for producing better teachers;
4. The shift from a periodic assessment of programs by the State Department of Education to a continuous interaction with the State Department personnel and other constituencies was a fiscal and organizational concern;
5. Possible revisions of general studies programs incorporating the essential competencies and learner outcomes to the public school curriculum would mean institutions of higher education would have an even greater portion of the curriculum determined by external agencies;
6. Institutions would be required to develop and maintain programs using different criteria while procedures, standards and certification patterns were being revised (developed), a process expected to take several years;
7. Institutions of higher education would be required to plan and implement on a fragmented ("developmental") basis as all public school essential competencies and learner outcomes and related educational personnel standards would not be available concurrently;

8. No provisions for obtaining the additional resources required to implement the proposed revisions in the program approval model were proposed;
9. There would be a different set of procedures for developing and approving new programs;
10. The role and responsibility of institutions of higher education for remediation would change; and
11. The proposed model implied a changing role for higher education in the continuing education of educational personnel.

The implications of the proposed changes were substantial and institutions of higher education had much at stake. Although higher education representatives were involved in the development of the "developmental model" concept, there had been no formal organizational mechanism or structure through which to generate a cohesive and articulated position/proposal/reaction from the teacher education community. Consequently, the input from higher education had been fragmented, lacking in coherence and without articulation.³

The lack of a formal, articulated response from higher education concerning what were proposals for major changes in the approach to training educational personnel was perceived to be symptomatic of a much broader issue. The initiative for the proposed changes had evolved almost totally from the State Department of Education. The response of higher education had been reactive and fragmented, and consisted primarily of individual and institutional responses and comments. There had been no coherent and articulated proactive proposal from higher education.

³(Note: One attempt to articulate a coordinated response from higher education was provided by the West Virginia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Representatives from the State Department of Education met with this group to solicit reactions and recommendations concerning the proposed "developmental model" concept.)

The process of revising the approach to training educational personnel in West Virginia reinforced the need for a coordinated and formalized approach for identifying and publicly considering needs, goals and strategies for teacher education in West Virginia. Recognizing and responding to this need, the West Virginia Board of Regents created the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

Teacher Education Advisory Committee

On January 8, 1982, on recommendation of the Academic Affairs Committee, the West Virginia Board of Regents formally established the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. The motion establishing the committee provided the broad parameters within which the group was to function: "Because of the continuing critical importance of teacher education to our state and society, I move that the Board of Regents establish a Teacher Education Advisory Committee, effective this date, to be composed of a representative to be appointed by the president of each public and private senior institution of higher education that has one or more programs which prepare educational personnel and functioning in accordance with the Board's Administrative Policy Bulletin No. 21."

Function and Role of the Committee. Within the Board of Regents advisory structure, Advisory Committees are created to insure a clear line of communication between the Board and professional specialists in the state system of higher education, and to provide broad participation in the higher education planning process. The Committees are concerned with research, planning, and development of important elements of the state system of higher education.

Specifically the Board's charge to the Teacher Education Advisory Committee was two-fold. The Committee was requested to consider any and all matters related to teacher education as it may desire and offer recommendations and proposals to

the Board. Secondly, the Committee was requested to consider items as may be presented from the Board and provide Committee reactions concerning them to the Board. Committee recommendations and proposals flow to the Board of Regents through the Academic Affairs Advisory Committee and Advisory Council of Public College Presidents. This procedure enables the Board of Regents to have the benefit of the professional views of both the Committee and the chief executive and academic officers of the colleges and universities.

Committee Membership. The membership of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee consists of a representative from each public and private sector institution of higher education that has one or more programs which prepare educational personnel. There are 17 such institutions in West Virginia, 11 public and six private.

Each Committee representative is appointed by the respective institutional president. Current Committee membership consists of the chief teacher education officers from each of the member institutions. At the outset, however, several institutions appointed their chief academic officers as representatives. As the Committee has evolved, these individuals have been replaced with the chief teacher education officer as the nature and function of the committee requires an operational knowledge of teacher education policies and procedures.

Committee Operation. During the first year of operation, a staff member of the Board of Regents served as Liaison Coordinator for the Committee. This individual chaired Committee meetings, transmitted Board requests to the Committee and Committee proposals to the Board, and provided administrative and professional services to the Committee.

Since that first year of operation, the Committee has elected a chairperson from within the membership. A Board of Regents staff member has continued to provide administrative support services to the Committee.

Issues Addressed By the Teacher Education Advisory Committee. As noted previously, a substantial portion of the Committee's agenda has been the development and implementation of the "developmental model". However, a review of Committee meeting minutes indicates a decreasing emphasis on this issue and a continually increasing focus on a broader range of teacher education issues.

Two examples serve to illustrate this point. As the group charged with serving as the primary advisory body for teacher education in the development of a new state master plan for higher education, the Committee has had to confront a variety of policy level issues on a state-wide basis. Issues such as teacher supply and demand, program duplication, admissions criteria, responding to teacher shortages and continuing education have been considered.

Secondly, the Committee has become much more knowledgeable about the legislative process and its implications for teacher education. Committee members have testified before legislative committees, established a procedure for monitoring and communicating information about proposed legislation and developed linkages with other groups interested in teacher education issues.

Outcomes

The Committee has been in operation for approximately 30 months. Although progress has been slow on occasion, several positive outcomes can be identified:

1. There has been a significant increase in cooperation and information sharing among the institutions;
2. The Committee has provided a mechanism for teacher education institutions to develop coordinated position statements and recommendations concerning specific issues;
3. Communication between teacher education institutions and the West Virginia Department of Education has become much more coordinated and less fragmented;

4. The development and operation of the Committee has increased the visibility of teacher education within the higher education structure;
5. The respective roles of IHEs, LEAs and the SEAs have been better clarified;
6. Teacher education personnel have become more knowledgeable about the legislative process and more involved politically in teacher education issues;
7. A better understanding of the diverse roles and functions of the teacher education institutions has developed;
8. There has been a visible commitment from the Board of Regents for support for teacher education;
9. Higher education has increased its influences on state-level policy development related to teacher education;
10. All constituencies are learning to work together; and
11. Coordination between public and private sector teacher education institutions has improved.

Future Concerns/Issues

Several major concerns and issues continue to face the Committee:

1. The need to continue efforts to define the role of the Committee and other constituent groups;
2. Several difficult decisions will need to be made as a new master plan for higher education in the State develops. It remains to be seen if the Committee can confront such decisions openly, put aside vested institutional interests, and provide recommendations in view of what is best for teacher education at the state level;

3. From time to time, issues will surface for which there will be disagreement between institutions. The extent to which these disagreements can be resolved in a reasonable manner will be indicative of the Committees viability as a state-level advisory group. This is particularly true for issues which cause conflict between the public and private sector institutions; and
4. The extent to which the Committee can become proactive rather than reactive is critical to the long-term vitality and effectiveness of the group.

Implications for Other States

What are the implications of the West Virginia experience for other states? In recent months we have had a variety of state-level teacher education advisory groups. However, the charge to many of these groups has been ad hoc in nature and focused on responding to the "crisis" in teacher education rather than the development of a structure which can provide continuing support for improvements in teacher education. It would appear that what is needed is a formal mechanism for continuing state-level collaboration among teacher education institutions. Though embryonic, the West Virginia experience would suggest that there is much to be gained by such a strategy.

Obviously, the organization, representation and operation of such a structure would need to be modified to reflect the idiosyncrasies of a given state. Factors to be considered include the governance structure for higher education, the role of the state education agency, the number of teacher education institutions, the political and legislative perspective on teacher education, and the relationship between the public and private sector teacher education institutions.

Summary

In summary, this paper has provided a description of the context within which the Teacher Education Advisory Committee was established. The rationale, composition and operation of the group were discussed. Outcomes achieved and future concerns of the Committee were discussed. Finally, the applicability of this model to other states was considered.